



# 2014 Iowa Rabies Summary

## ANIMAL RABIES IN IOWA:

In 2014, 15 cases of animal rabies were reported in Iowa, which is slightly higher than the number identified in 2013 (see the Table 1 below). Rabies was identified most frequently in wildlife species including 10 bats and 2 skunks. Two cases were diagnosed in cows and one case was diagnosed in a cat.

**Table 1: Positive Rabies Cases 2004-2014**

Species	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Bat	47	60	28	13	11	11	10	12	17	6	10	225
Skunk	28	33	13	5	7	13	13	7	9	4	2	134
Cat	11	5	7	7	9	3	1	3	1	0	1	48
Cow	10	7	4	0	1	5	1	3	4	2	2	39
Dog	3	2	2	5	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	16
Horse	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Fox	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Squirrel	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Badger	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>470</b>

During 2014, 1409 animals in Iowa were tested for rabies and 15 were confirmed positive (1.06%). The percent positive varies greatly by species, see the Table 2 below. It is important to note that this data is greatly influenced by the number of animals tested. Many animals are tested because they have contact with humans or domestic animals and they exhibit unusual behavior or clinical signs making them more likely to be infected with the rabies virus. For these reasons, the percentages should not be considered representative of the true distribution of disease within the animal population in Iowa.

**Table 2: Percent Positive by Species in 2014**

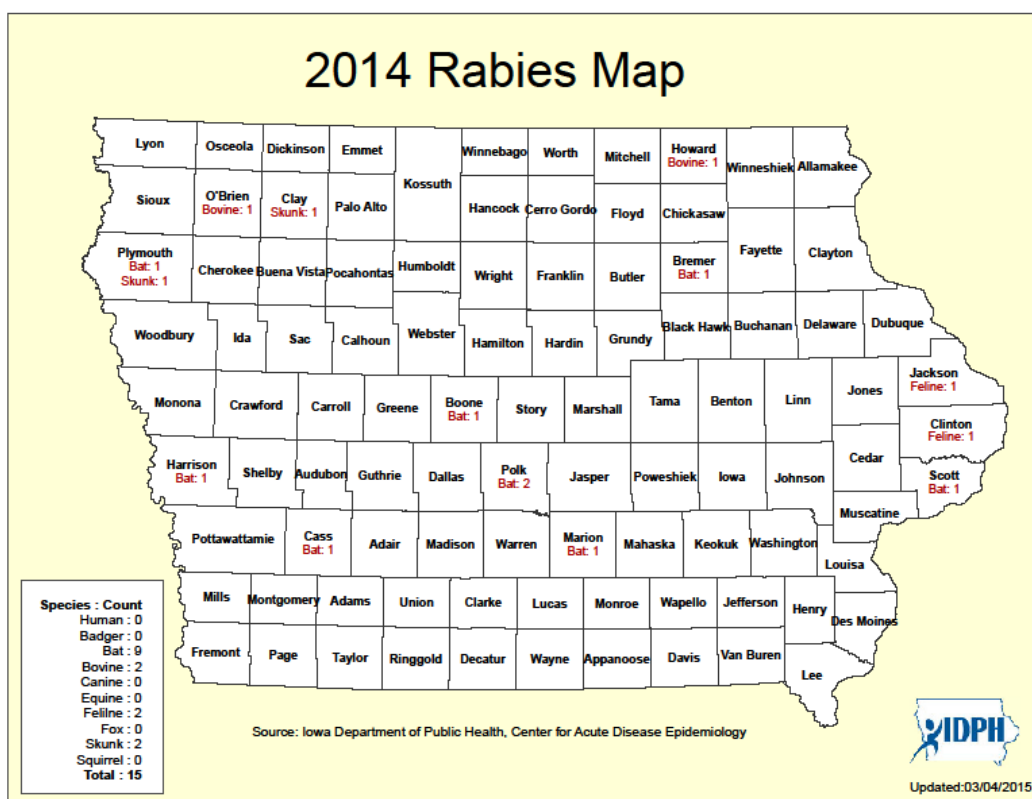
Species	Positive	Total Tested	% Positive
Skunk	2	7	28.6
Cow	2	82	2.44
Bat	10	487	2.05
Cat	1	366	0.27

There are two rabies strains that commonly circulate in Iowa (bat and skunk), and many different species can be infected with these strains. In animal samples that are strongly positive for rabies, the State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL) can differentiate the rabies strain that infected the animal (the strain typing procedure is only effective in samples that are strongly positive as opposed to weakly positive). In 2014, SHL was able to identify the rabies strain in 7 of the positive rabies cases, 4 were bat strain and 3 were skunk strain. Bat strain rabies was identified in 4 bats. Skunk strain rabies was identified in 2 skunks and 1 cow.

In Iowa, the most common bat species submitted for testing are the Big Brown bat and Little Brown bat; however other bat species are occasionally tested.

**Table 3: Bat Species Tested and Positive for Rabies Infection**

Species	Positive	Total Tested
Eptesicus fuscus (Big Brown bat)	10	456
Myotis lucifugus (Little Brown Bat)	0	18
Nycticeius humeralis (Evening Bat)	0	3
Lasiurus borealis (Eastern Red Bat)	0	2
Lasiurus cinereus (Hoary bat)	0	1
Myotis sodalis (Indiana Bat)	0	1
Unknown	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>487</b>



There are two laboratories that test animals for rabies in Iowa:

- State Hygienic Laboratory at the University of Iowa
- Iowa State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Iowa animals are also periodically tested in out-of-state laboratories

## HUMAN RABIES IN IOWA:

Iowa's most recent human rabies case occurred in 2002, and was caused by the bat strain. Prior to that, the last reported case occurred in 1951.

While the exact number of people who receive rabies post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) each year in the United States is unknown, it is estimated to be about 40,000 people. Based upon Iowa's population, that would equate to approximately 390 Iowan's receiving PEP each year.

Rabies information is accessible on the IDPH website, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/rabies.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/rabies.asp)  
IDPH provides 24/7 rabies consultation at 800-362-2736 during business hours or 515-323-4360 after hours